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Sermon for Good Friday.

1 COR. 6, 20.

In John 3, 14, 15 Christ, our Lord, indicates the purpose of His death upon the cross and the great comfort which we are to gather from that source. As the brazen serpent, which Moses raised on the pole in the wilderness, healed the Israelites from the bites of the fiery, poisonous serpents, which God had sent into the camp for their disobedience, and thus rescued them from death, if they looked at it with trust in the word of the Lord, thus He, the Son of Man, must be lifted up on the cross, so that mankind, bitten by the fiery serpent of hell and poisoned by the deadly venom of sin, might look at Him with the eyes of faith, and by such look of faith be saved from eternal death.

Ah! is this not a glorious comfort? Who can utter its sweetness, who can duly appreciate and realize the joy which it ought to bring to every bosom? Let us remember that if it were not for the Savior who to-day died for us upon the cross on Calvary there would be no salvation for us miserable, condemned sinners; there could be nothing but eternal, everlasting damnation in store for us in the world to come; our sins must drag us down into the flames and tortures of hell. Nothing that we might have done could have saved us from the doom that was impending over our heads. Try to realize it for a moment: no Savior, no salvation, no possibility of rescue from endless punishment and misery! Does it not make the blood run cold in your veins just to think of such a predicament? But O joy! it is not so. We are not lost, we are not to be damned. There is help, there is salvation for us. For we have a Savior. To-day He was lifted up for us on Calvary; to-day He hung upon the cross; to-day He bled and suffered and died in our place; to-day He suffered the punishment of our sin and took away its guilt and curse and penalty, so "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have ever-

lasting life." Now we can laugh at sin and Satan and hell, for they can harm us no more. For "there is life in a look at the Crucified One." If we will but look at Jesus on the cross, if we will but turn to Him in faith, if we do but accept the ransom He paid for us, we are safe, we are free from the bondage and penalty of sin, hell is closed against us, and heaven's gates are swung wide open, and our heavenly Father stands there with open arms ready to receive us into the eternal life of joy and bliss in heaven. And do not forget the word "whosoever"! Every one that believes on Him shall have eternal life, no matter who he is and what he is, no matter how great his sins may be: if he but believes in Christ and trusts in Him, his sins are forgiven and he is free. Christ's redemption is a universal redemption; it includes all sinners, not a single one excepted. Oh, therefore, do but look at Him, ye sinners, it is all you have to do, you must only believe, only trust in Him, only allow Him to take away your sins and to save you. Only believe in Him, that is all, and you are eternally saved. Neither sin nor Satan, nor hell has any claim to you any longer, and heaven is your certain inheritance with all its eternal, endless, unspeakable joy and happiness.

This is the comfort Christ's death contains for us all. Oh, that none of us would let this day pass without embracing this comfort! — But there is still another view of this picture. There is another lesson we can learn from the death of Christ. It is inculcated by our text. Guided by it, let us now contemplate:

CHRIST'S DEATH AS AN EARNEST ADMONITION TO LEAD
A HOLY LIFE.

It is such,

1. *Because by His death Christ bought us for His own,*
2. *So that it is consequently our duty to serve Him by a holy life.*

1.

Paul tells the Corinthians in our text (and, of course, the words apply to all Christians as well as to those at Corinth): "Ye are bought with a price." There is very, very much contained in these words. What do they mean? We can learn this from the context. Paul adds: "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." If we take these words together, we can learn from them that Paul's meaning is, that we were bought for God and hence are His property, belonging to Him by right of purchase. And as to the price that we were bought with, there can be no doubt as to what that may be: it is nothing else than the precious blood and the innocent suffering and death of Christ, our Redeemer. Peter states this 1 Pet. 1, 18. 19. (See Acts 20, 28.)

The first thing, then, that we can learn from this is, that we must be bought by God, and that hence we did not belong to Him. And this

was the case indeed. We indeed did belong to God in a certain way, for we were His creatures, He was our Creator, and therefore our sovereign Ruler. But we were only in His kingdom of power. The tender relations of love and harmony which had originally existed between God and man as he issued forth out of His creative hands no longer existed. These had all been disturbed by the fall of man. Man had turned away from God, had declared that he would not be ruled by Him, had rebelled against His government, and had sold himself into the hands and power of the devil. And to the devil we all belonged, therefore, we were his slaves, were his, body and soul, for time and for eternity. He ruled over man with an absolute, despotic sway and power. He led him from one sin and abomination into another, he exacted from him a willing but a hard, intolerable service, and finally in death he dragged him down into his everlasting kingdom of misery and woe in the flames and torments of hell. This dreadful master had us all in his clutches; sin had delivered us all into his hands; we were born into his kingdom. The whole human race, without a single exception, belonged to him, and if a single man was to be rescued from his slavery and dominion, if a single soul was to be saved from the doom which Satan brings upon his slaves, and be reclaimed for God and for eternal bliss in heaven, for which God had intended every man, he must be bought, yes, strange enough, he must be bought again, must be repurchased for God, to whom he belonged originally and by right of creation.

But how was this to be done? How was mankind to be torn out of Satan's clutches? Who was to pay the price that was necessary to ransom them? Could man do this himself? Could we purchase our own liberty and free ourselves from the bonds of sin and Satan? Ah, no! How could we? How could the slaves pay their own ransom? You all know that such a thing is altogether out of the question. A slave belongs to his master as his property; his master has a right to expect all the work the slave can perform for nothing. By all his labor the slave cannot earn a cent, and never in all his life will he be able to make a dollar towards securing his ransom. If he is to become free, another must pay his ransom for him. Unless some humane person takes pity on his wretched condition, he must remain a slave until death relieves him from his bondage. And thus it was with man's spiritual slavery. We were utterly unable to liberate ourselves from the bondage of sin and from the power of the devil. As long as we must depend upon our own resources, we must remain in the power of sin and Satan as long as we lived, and when death came, we must suffer the punishment for the ignominious and iniquitous services which we had rendered to this wicked master here on earth. Eternal damnation was our inevitable, irrevocable doom. If we were ever to become free, if the bondage of our slavery was to

be broken, we must be purchased by another, some one else must pay the price of our ransom.

But who was to do it? Who could pay the price that was demanded for our release? Ah, he who was to rescue us must be a mightier one than our master, the devil, for this our lord was very unwilling to give us up. Only a stronger one could come and take away from him his spoil. Who could be that stronger one? Could a sinless, holy man pay the price and redeem us from the power of the devil? Ah no, for "none of them" (= no rich man) "can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever), that he should still live forever and not see corruption." All the money in the world will not redeem a man from temporal death, much less can any man, though he be holy, redeem a brother from eternal death. Or could an angel have redeemed us? Nay, no angel, mighty and powerful though they be, could have performed this task of ransoming the human race from the power of Satan. This could only be done by an almighty, infinite, eternal being. For an infinite price must be paid, an eternal redemption must be wrought, and this could only be done by one who was himself infinite and eternal. Who, then, could pay this price and effect this redemption? We would seek in vain to solve the problem with our reason. We would never have found an answer to it. But God's eternal wisdom found the answer. And we know from His Word what the answer was which He found: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, God sent His own, His only-begotten Son, who is coequal, coeternal with Himself, to pay the price that was necessary to redeem lost mankind. This, He saw, was the only way in which the ransom of man could be effected; thus alone could we be rescued from eternal destruction; thus alone could we be reclaimed from endless misery and woe for eternal glory and happiness in heaven. This means He therefore chose to redeem us. Though it was a great sacrifice to give up His only Son for the redemption of sinners that were unworthy of such a ransom, though we had willfully turned our backs upon Him, and though we willfully had sold ourselves into the hands of the devil, yea, though our only delight now was to serve the devil and to insult Him, our Creator, yet His infinite, unspeakable love prompted Him to make even such a great sacrifice, to give up His only Son that He might pay the price which was necessary to ransom us from the bondage and punishment of sin.

Such, then, was the personage that was selected by God to pay the price which was to set us free. But what was the price that was demanded? The price was not gold or silver, none of the treasures

of this world, nay, it was nothing else than suffering and death. For by sin we had sold ourselves to Satan, by sin we were held in the power of Satan, and sin is an affront against the righteousness of God, sin merits death, temporal and eternal death, with all the evils and sufferings connected with death. Hence he who would loose us from the bondage and penalty of sin must bear the punishment of sin, must suffer and die for us. For "death," says Scripture, "is the wages of sin."

But how could the Son of God die for us? Can God die? Nay, God Himself cannot die, nor could His Son, who is of the same essence with the Father. Hence His Son must come down upon this earth, must become a man like unto us, sin excepted, and then, after assuming our nature and thus becoming capable of suffering and dying, must pay the price that had to be paid for our ransom. And thus it is that we have Christmas, the festival commemorating the birth of our Savior, His coming into this world a true man with body and soul. Thus it is that we also have Good Friday, the day on which we commemorate the death of the Savior, which, as we heard, He had to suffer if He would pay the price by which alone we could be ransomed from sin, death, Satan, and hell.

Such, my friends, is the price with which we have been bought, such the ransom by which we were redeemed from the power of Satan, from the curse and penalty of sin, from the endless torments of hell: the death of God's own Son upon the cursed tree of the cross, the shedding of His precious, innocent blood, and the unspeakable sufferings that He underwent prior to His death. Truly, a great price, a price great beyond our powers of comprehension. Surely, when we consider this price by which God purchased us for His own, we ought to be ready and willing to consecrate ourselves to Him and to serve Him in holiness and piety all the days of our life. It is this we are admonished to do by Paul in our text, and this admonition of Paul we now wish to consider in the second place.

2.

"Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Truly, it's a mighty argument that the apostle here wields: Ye are bought with the infinite price of the suffering and death of God's own Son, therefore it behooves you now to glorify God both in your body and spirit, which now doubly belong to God—first, by right of creation, and secondly, by right of repurchase from the bondage of sin. Could a stronger plea be made for a Christian's duty to serve his God with all the powers of body and soul? And could a Christian, one who loves God and who has experienced the sweetness of the forgiveness of sin, disregard this plea? Surely, he who would and could do that would reveal by such

an act that he was not a true Christian, not a child of God, but, rather, an enemy of God and a friend of the devil.

Let us dwell for a moment upon this plea for holiness which the apostle makes. He means to say: If you consider the price by which you were ransomed from the guilt and bondage and penalty of sin, can you then still persist to live in sin any longer? When you bear in mind that God gave up His own Son and sent Him down into this world to die for you, can you then insult and grieve that God of love any longer by living in sin? Jesus, to redeem you from the guilt and eternal punishment of sin, died for you on the cross, and now you can serve that same sin? Jesus suffers Himself to be tortured and put to death by His enemies, and you can go and abuse or even kill your fellowmen? Jesus atones for sins of dishonesty by being robbed of His clothes, and you can still act dishonestly in business affairs and defraud your neighbor? Jesus is stripped of His clothing and hangs naked upon the cross to atone for your sins of lust and pride, and you can now live in sins of immorality and lasciviousness? Jesus suffers thirst and hunger upon the cross, and when in His agony He cries out, "I thirst!" is offered vinegar to increase His thirst, and you can go and partake of strong drinks to an excess, and degrade yourself below the brutes? Jesus, while He is abused and mistreated by His enemies, turns to His Father and prays: "Father, forgive them," etc., and you will not forgive your brother who has offended you? Nay, nay, that is not, that cannot be possible, the apostle wishes to say, you cannot live in willful sins, when you know that the Savior suffered so much to redeem you from each and every sin. Nay, you cannot do any otherwise now than to consecrate yourself, your body and spirit, to the service of God and to glorify Him with a holy, virtuous life, to serve Him in singleness of heart and soul, and to renounce sin in whatsoever shape and form.

Oh, let us, therefore, take to heart the earnest admonition of the apostle in our text. Let us be incited by the consideration of the great price that has been paid for us to renounce all sins and to serve God by a pious and holy life, and thus to glorify Him both in our body and in our spirit. Let us, in the first place, examine our past life to see how we have spent the years already gone by. Oh, if we cast a glance backwards, we will all find that "in many things we offend all," that we have often given way to sin, that we have not always been as zealous in the pursuit of holiness as we ought to have been. We all have a great deal to repent of. We have sinned by words, thoughts, and deeds. We have transgressed every commandment of the Decalogue. Oh, let us make a clean breast of it, let us cast ourselves into the dust before God and confess: Lord, I have often shown myself unworthy of the great price Thou hast paid for me. I have not served Thee as faithfully, not glorified Thy name by

my life as zealously as I ought to have done, on the contrary, I have often offended Thee by willful sins and evildoings. O forgive me, my Father, though I am unworthy to receive Thy forgiveness after having spurned Thy kindness so often and so shamefully despised the great ransom Thou hast paid for me.

And having thus reviewed the past and sought forgiveness for the sins already committed, let us now, on the day that our Savior died for us upon the cross and ransomed us from sin and death by the great price of His suffering and death, let us to-day renew the pledge of our baptismal vow to "renounce again the devil and all his works and all his pomp," to renounce sin in every shape and form, and consecrate our future life to God alone. Let us solemnly vow that henceforth we will be more earnest in our fight against sin and more zealous in our striving after holiness. Yea, let us take the firm resolve that henceforth we will "glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's," purchased by Him with a great and inestimable price. Let us resolve that henceforth our body shall not be given over to the practice of any kind of sin, whether it be that of dishonesty, or immorality, or drunkenness, or lying and slander-ing, or cursing and swearing, but that henceforth our body shall be devoted to the practice of works of piety and love, to the faithful discharge of the duties of our calling, to the hearing of God's Word and the use of the sacraments, to the offering up of prayer and the giving of thanks, to the performing of deeds of charity, and other deeds by which God is glorified. Let us also resolve that henceforth our spirit shall not be given to evil thoughts and desires, to lust and pride, to envy and anger, to evil thoughts about our neighbors, etc., but that, by the help of God, we will banish such and the like sinful, wicked thoughts and desires from our bosom more and more, and give place to holy thoughts and desires instead; that we will henceforth have our "delight in the Law of the Lord and meditate in His Law day and night;" that thoughts of prayer and thanksgiving shall occupy our heart and mind. Yea, let us form the firm resolution to-day, that we will keep the great price which God has paid for our souls constantly before our minds, and let it incite us to glorify God both in our body and in our spirit, which are the Lord's by virtue of the great price He paid for them.

O friends, I beseech you, do not deceive yourselves! Do not let the devil make you believe that, since Christ died upon the cross for us and thus atoned for our sins, it makes little difference whether we now live in sin or not, as long as we believe in Christ and accept the ransom He has paid for us. The comfort which we derive from Christ's suffering and death, as I showed you at the beginning, is truly a glorious comfort, and even the greatest sinner may console himself with it. But it will not do to lay hold of that comfort of the

forgiveness of sin and then to persist in a life of sin! There is no such thing as believing in Christ and, at the same time, serving sin. You may call yourself a Christian, you may belong to a Christian congregation, you may profess to believe in Christ, but it is all sham, it is all in vain, unless you put your religion into practice and lead a godly life. Unless you do that, your profession of faith and your knowledge of religion will only do you positive harm, for it will increase your damnation in the world to come. Oh, therefore heed the exhortation of our text: do consider by what a great price you have been bought, and let it incite you to glorify the Lord in your body and in your spirit, so that you may not by your own fault lose the ineffable benefit which it was designed to bring to you. God grant us grace to seek salvation with Christ alone, and not to lose it again, after we have found it, by a wicked, sinful life. Amen. G. L.

Sermon on the Gospel for Easter Sunday.

MARK 16, 1—8.

Our Gospel narrates a great event in simplest language. After sunset on the Sabbath day, Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, and Joanna bought sweet spices, or aromatic herbs, that they might come and anoint the body of Jesus. As day began to dawn, the first day of the week, Sunday, they came to the sepulcher at sunrise. While on their way thither, they said among themselves: "Who shall roll," etc., v. 4. But looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled away. Going into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted, were awe-struck at the sight, for he was a messenger from heaven. Sent by God, he delivered his message: "Be not affrighted," etc., v. 6. The open, empty grave proves what has come to pass, affirms the angel's message. He adds: "But go your way," etc., v. 7. The angel and his message affrighted the women. "They went out quickly," etc., v. 8.

This is the inspired account of an event grand in its meaning, grand in its results, grand in every respect—an account, the truth of which does not admit of doubt; it is as certain as any in history, yea, more so, being handed down, not by fallible historical writers, but by the infallible Spirit of God,—an event that stands out from the rest in this, that it confirms them and assures us that they are true, and that He who promulgated them was not an impostor,—an event upon which rests, as a confirmed, indubitable fact, our redemption from sin, Satan, death, and hell. This event confirms, estab-

lishes, proves, and gives everyone the surety of his salvation. Take it out of Christianity, and Christianity will collapse, as an arch which lacks the keystone. Place this gem in, and the structure, joined together, stands firm, and bids defiance to all enemies. It is the proclamation of the grandest victory that ever was obtained. 'Twas a horrible battle, a bloody fight, a tragic scene, a dark day, but it ended in glorious victory. It is the announcement of the full and satisfactory payment of a tremendous debt, the debt of the human race to God for their offenses committed against His Law. Ah, great event, indubitable fact, sweet proclamation, transporting news: "Jesus of Nazareth," etc., v. 6.

To understand the meaning of this, allow me to address you on:

THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

It proves,

1. *That we are redeemed;*
2. *That Christ's doctrine is true;*
3. *That we also shall rise from the dead.*

1.

As the rays of the setting sun danced along the western horizon on Good Friday, dipping in heavenly blue, they had shone upon a scene they will never again view. Yonder, outside of the wall of Jerusalem, on Mount Calvary, the Son of God and man humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Laden with the sins of man, forsaken by His own heavenly Father, Jesus, crying with a loud voice, gave up His ghost about three o'clock in the afternoon. What means this suffering of an innocent person? The Bible tells us that He was wounded for our transgressions, etc., Is. 53, 5. Christ's agony, suffering, and death was, as Scripture affirms, substitutional, in the place of the human race. His atonement was for the sins of man, His expiation was for mankind, His satisfaction was for all. That His payment was satisfactory and accepted by God Easter morn proves. Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, who suffered and died, is risen, and "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead." God raised Him from the dead to prove that His wrath, kindled against sin, was appeased in this Holy and Just One, that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, and that in Him the sinner has redemption, complete redemption!

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins," says Paul. It is useless for you to believe in Him; for how can He who is dead and buried grant you remission of sins? How could you know that He has paid your debt? It would be impossible. Your faith, instead of resting upon a rock, would be built upon sand.

It would be doubtful whether your sins were all atoned for; nay, your sins would not be forgiven, as Paul asserts. At the most we could say, Christ made an attempt to make an offering for sin, He did His utmost, but His death shows that God was not satisfied with His sacrifice. But, O sinner, go to the grave; look at the place where He was laid! He is not there, He is risen. His Father has accepted the offering for sin, is well pleased with it, fully satisfied, and Christ is now able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. His resurrection vouches for the payment of our sins.

Again, His resurrection is the proclamation of victory over Satan and the gates of hell. He fought with the Foe from the very beginning. After His baptism He went out into the desert, and Satan tempted Him; but Christ prevailed over him. And the last battle was most fierce. Satan fought as never before, and when the Prince of Life expired on the cross and was laid into the sepulcher, it seemed as if Satan had won the battle, overcoming Him who had come to crush the Serpent's head. The disciples despaired, were frightened, and scattered, believing this was the end of all their hopes. But oh, the rising sun in the east shines on an empty grave, a grave that could not hold the living God! Satan is overcome, his plans are balked, his bands are torn in shapeless shreds—Jesus the Crucified rises, leads captivity captive, and delivers from the power of darkness.

Justification, the central doctrine of Scripture, is established by Christ's resurrection. The great question, that vital question which all who seek redemption must know: "What must I do to be saved?" is answered for all: "Christ was delivered," etc., Rom. 4, 25. Our sins slew Him, put Him to death; His resurrection declares us righteous. By His ignominious death God is reconciled, by His glorious resurrection this is proclaimed. The sinner accepts by faith the reconciliation Christ wrought between man and God, and thus becomes a child of heaven. That we are righteous Christ's rising proves—He was raised for our justification. "Who shall lay," etc., Rom. 8, 33, 34.

Redemption is completed, sin atoned for, Satan overcome, justification a positive fact, in the risen Lord. Indeed, a great, a glorious event for all the children of men! Jesus of Nazareth is risen, is no longer dead, no longer in the grave, but alive—a proof for our redemption.

I know that my Redeemer lives! etc. (Hymn 92, 1.)

2.

That Christ's doctrine is true we see from His resurrection. The angel at the empty sepulcher tells the frightened women: "Go and tell," etc., v. 7. On the way to the Mount of Olives Jesus had said

to His disciples: "After that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." Here Jesus points to His resurrection. One day the scribes and Pharisees came to Him, saying: "Master, we would see a sign from Thee." But He said unto them: "An evil and adulterous generation," etc., Matt. 12, 39. 40. He foretells His death and the length of it. Again He says: "Destroy this temple," speaking of His body, "and in three days I will raise it up." From these passages we learn that Jesus pointed to His resurrection as an event to confirm the truth of His mission. Had He not risen, He would have been an impostor of the most serious kind.

Other scriptures would necessarily have to be rejected, such as: "Thou wilt not . . . suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption," or, "They shall scourge Him, and put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again." These prophecies have been literally fulfilled. We have therefore no reason to doubt them. The resurrection is as certain as any historical event, yea, more so, and hence establishes the truth of Christ's teachings.

Read the sermons of the apostles in Acts! In them we find the resurrection pointed to as a confirmation of Jesus' doctrine. None that had witnessed His crucifixion and death, and hearing of His resurrection, ventured to deny His doctrine; on the contrary, they embraced it, being firmly convinced of its truth by His resurrection. Yes, His resurrection is a strong, convincing argument for the truth of His words. Suppose a man would tell us that he would die, but that three days afterwards he would rise from the dead. After some time the man really dies, is killed, so that there is no possibility of fraud. After three days he arises, he shows himself, we see him, we touch him at places where he had peculiar marks. Would you not admit that he spoke the truth? Certainly every man with enough common sense to be called sane would. And he that does not simply lacks common sense and hates truth. We have the same thing with regard to Christ's teaching. He foretold what would befall Him; the Old Testament did also. All this has come to pass. Did He not, then, speak the truth? It is surprising to find people caviling at this. Those who deny it deny history, and if they would carry their principles to the last conclusion, they would have to deny all historical events, would have to deny everything that happened to themselves, yea, would have to doubt their own existence, as some of them really have done.

Again, Jesus' resurrection proves that He was the Messiah. Jesus wrought many miracles, so that the people were amazed, astonished, bewildered, and convinced of His divinity. The sick are restored to health; the lame throw their crutches away and walk; the blind open their eyes to gaze upon Him; the deaf hear the sweet voice of their Savior; the dumb sing songs of praise; the hungry are fed;

yea, the dead are called back into life; and evil spirits are cast out. All these things show forth the omnipotence and glory of the true Messiah; all are supernatural, divine works. But the greatest miracle, the strongest proof and manifestation of His Messiahship is His own resurrection from the dead. There is nothing like it, it is unprecedented. Some have been raised by others, as Lazarus, but after a certain time died again; Jesus, however, arose by His own power to live forever. All other miracles pale before this one: Christ lays down His life and takes it again. Our text gives the historic account of it. In the sight of this, is it not true what He testified of Himself and what the prophets foretold of Him? Is He not God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and the promised Messiah? Who can doubt His words, His teachings, His doctrines? Go to the sepulcher, hearken unto the angel! What does he tell you? "Jesus of Nazareth is risen!" Ah,

He lives triumphant from the grave, etc. (Hymn 92, 2.)

3.

Jesus' resurrection is proof for our resurrection. Death is a great horror, a fearful thing. Man shuns it, flees from it as fast as he can; his blood curdles at the very thought of it. O death, what a fearful monster thou art! Around us, to our right and to our left, do we see his work. He stalks through the earth day and night, nipping tender buds, blasting beautiful blossoms, bleaching healthy frames, blowing down sturdy oaks. We see them under the sod in all stages, in all ages, in all ranks, in all families, in all countries, in all nations. Go out to the graveyards! There stand the marble statues speaking to us of the handful of dust that lies beneath them. Yea, the whole earth is nothing but a depository for the victims of this bitter foe. Oh, he is a horrid fiend, dreaded and feared by many! Why? Because they have no hope!

Where, I ask, is there anything in this world that gives you the least comfort in the dying hour, apart from the Bible? Search the world for it, there is none. In vain do you seek. It is the Scriptures alone that offer you help in this strait. They alone tell you something positive about the future, about the land beyond the grave. They speak to you of the destiny of your soul, and reveal to you what shall befall your body. Without them we would grope in darkness on these matters. They tell us that the body will rise again. It is indeed sown in corruption. We see the body placed into the ground, decay, and pass into dust. As far as we can see there remains nothing but ashes. But the Word of God, the bright light in this dark world, tells us that the body will rise again on the last day and be reunited with the soul, either for eternal life or for eternal death. This corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal will put on im-

mortality, at the sound of the last trump. Then the graveyards will be scenes of life, of quickening, of glorious resurrections!

In the 15th chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthians Paul sets forth this hope of the Christian thus: "If Christ be preached," etc., vv. 12. 13. If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. But our text manifestly declares that Jesus of Nazareth *is* risen. He has conquered death, corruption, and mortality. He is "become the first-fruits of them," etc., 1 Cor. 15, 20—22. *He* lives, *we* shall live; *He* arose, *we* shall arise.

By faith you are a member of His; hence you cannot remain in death. For He is a God of the living and not of the dead, as He Himself declares. As the Captain of our salvation, He went into death and the grave, and came forth into life again; we follow Him, we die, are buried, and shall arise. Are we sure of this?

Yes; this is as positive as all other truths of Scripture. Bible passages assert it. "The hour is coming," etc., John 5, 28. 29. This day bears evidence to it. Behold the place where He was laid! He is not there, He is risen, the Forerunner and Representative of all His people. If He is the firstfruits, shall not the rest of the harvest be gathered into the heavenly garner? Indeed, we can exclaim with Paul: "Death is swallowed up in victory," etc., 1 Cor. 15, 54—57.

See, friend, the victory is yours through Christ, victory over sin, over Satan, over death! These are the Easter tidings unto you; they come to you through Him who is risen. Are you His? Can you join Paul in this cry: "Victory!"? Every humble believer can, every humble believer does. By faith in the risen Lord your sins are forgiven; he that believeth shall be saved. By faith in the risen Lord the world is overcome. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." By faith in the risen Lord Satan is conquered, for Christ has crushed his head. By faith in the risen Lord we are able to walk in the valley of death; may it be ever so dark and dangerous, may our sins hang over us on the one side like impending mountains, and may the other be lined with the forces of hell: we shall pass through without evil coming nigh unto us. The Star of our hope, the Rock of our confidence, the Pillar of our faith is stable and firm; our Savior has gone before us, has passed through the valley into life and glory; we follow Him.

The grave is a dark place indeed; but it is become the abode of the Light of the world. Can there be darkness there? "Jesus scattered all its gloom." Here is one of the strongest reasons, my friend, why you should accept religion: it gives relief and comfort in death, and the blessed eternity it launches in. We may do all that we can to avoid the last bitter hour, but it is coming, drawing nearer with

every breath we take; you will have to meet the foe! How are you going to cope with him? There is but one way that insures victory, and that is, Meet him with life, meet him with the risen, living Savior! Then the victory is yours ere you enter the valley, for Christ has overcome death in that He died for you and rose again.

It is stated that Dr. Luther, in a time of great spiritual distress, wrote upon the walls of his house: "He lives, He lives, He lives!" And may this be also our consolation amidst all the ills and woes of this life. When in need, He lives to help; when faint, He lives to comfort; when troubled, He lives to calm your heart; when weary and worn, He lives to succor; when night approaches, He lives to save.

Lives again our glorious King, etc. (Hymn 90, 4.)

He lives; all glory to His name! etc. (Hymn 92, 8.)

F. W. ADAMS, *contr.* by O. K.

Outline for Sermon on Good Friday.

MATT. 27, 57—66.

This text depicts the closing scene of the life of our Lord in the flesh. A solemn stillness had settled on Golgotha. The strife of tongues had ceased; the reviler had become hushed; the frivolous crowd to whom this awful event had been a holiday sport had dispersed, cowed and abashed at the strange phenomena which accompanied the death of Jesus. His mouth, too, was closed to these men forever. His soul had winged its flight to paradise. The centurion with his comrades sat watching their victims in quiet contemplation of the strange happenings to which they had been witnesses. Otherwise the place was forsaken. In the distance the forms of a few women were to be seen gazing with wounded affection in the direction of the cross on which their Hope had expired. And the awful silence was broken only by the moans of the two companions of the Lord who were still struggling with death.—Was Jesus really dead? Was it possible that the Prince of Life, the almighty God, should die? Is not the whole statement self-contradictory, this whole scene a delusion? Nay, behold the preparations for His funeral. Ponder the meaning of those words of the Creed:

"HE WAS BURIED."

1. *To prove the reality of His death.*

a. Jesus had meant to die, had acted and spoken as a dying person acts and speaks, Luke 23, 46. The spirit had quitted its temporary tabernacle of the flesh; a separation of body and soul had

actually taken place. What remained on the cross was "the body" of Jesus, a lifeless corpse.

b. Neither the friends nor the enemies of Jesus entertained the least doubt that death had actually taken place. The former would never have thought of a burial, would not have chosen His grave, brought the proper shroud and the materials for embalming the corpse, if there had been the least uncertainty about His death; the latter could not have argued to the Roman governor as they did, if they had not been certain of the death of Christ. Their request to Pilate does not assume the possibility of Jesus being buried alive, but the danger of a pious fraud that might be practiced upon His corpse.

c. One person seems to have had misgivings as to the truthfulness of the report that Jesus had expired. Pilate does not readily credit the report; he takes sure and decisive steps to verify it, and the test which the guard applied removes the last possibility of a mistake being made in the burying of Jesus.

d. What immense issues hang upon the truthfulness of this statement: He was dead and buried! The Sin-Bearer must meet with just this fate, or He is not the Sin-Bearer. A fictitious death producing only a seeming corpse could not be a vicarious death, could not be substituted for ours, who have deserved real death. The entire teaching on the atonement to be accomplished by the Messiah, Christ's own teaching concerning His ransoming endeavor would be vitiated, the whole elaborate argument of Paul in Rom. 5 would be destroyed, if the least element of uncertainty were to enter into the account of the death of Christ. His burial rivets the evidence of His death, and therewith confirms the prophetic and apostolic statements regarding the saving efficacy of His death. "He was buried"—terrible tidings, an appalling truth, yet an adorable fact!

2. To overcome death.

a. Death had conquered the Son of God. But there were men of keen memories in Jerusalem who recalled to their disquiet a certain remarkable saying of Jesus to the effect that He would conquer death after it had conquered Him. That saying contained an unmistakable reference to His burial; for He had spoken of His resurrection. If these men, who claimed to be children of the prophets, had studied their prophets, their disquiet would have been turned into overwhelming dismay and confusion; for had not the Anointed been represented by David as exposed but not subject to corruption? Had He not been called "destruction" to the grave and "a pestilence" to hell?

b. In demanding the removal of the corpse of the Lord the enemies of Christ were unwittingly preparing for the fulfillment of

prophecies. They were placing Jesus where He must be placed in order to prove the truth of His words. Wrath prompts their action, and their wrath must praise God. The stigma of imposture is fastened by them even on the tomb of the Man whom they have hated, in order that the broken seal may witness for Him and establish Him a true prophet. — “He was *buried*” — the high priest may smile and look pleased as he tells the scribe this piece of news, and they both may chuckle with delight. Never mind! Ere three suns shall have set, the news will have to be told with a slight, yet mighty difference: “He *was buried*.”

3. *To hallow our graves.*

a. Marks of affection, love’s labor, yea, heroic acts of faith relieve these sable scenes. Disciples of the forsaken and despised prophet begin to make their appearance. They shrink from no sacrifice: noble senators risk to offend their influential colleagues by asking for the privilege which Rome’s governors had to grant to the friends of an executed criminal; a rich man gives up his own grave for Christ; the expense for linen and spices is not begrudged, even women participating in this charitable effort, in order that Jesus’ grave may be properly prepared, and He may be laid to rest decently. And two disciples, whom the timidity of their sex might have driven from the place of interment, sit down within sight of the tomb, while the dusk of the evening is gathering about them, and brave the fearful solitariness of this secluded spot and this late hour to watch the interment of their Friend.

b. Yes, these friendly people were preparing Jesus’ grave. To tell the truth, Jesus was preparing their graves. When the stone-slab had finally shut in the body, the chamber of the dead for the first time since men had buried a corpse held the Author of all life, Him who had said: “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” The gloom of the grave was lighted up with the Light of the world. Dust and ashes became seeds of blissful immortality. For the burden which sinks men into the dismal grave, and deeper still, into the abyss of despair, had with this Corpse been buried forever, out of God’s sight, out of the sight of men. The curse pronounced in Eden upon the tomb of every sinner had been removed. The Redeemer has lain in a man’s grave, to show to men that the tomb has no terrors, need have no terrors any more for men. It is become a hallowed spot to the believing soul who looks forward longingly to the hour when he shall fall asleep in Jesus, and his weary limbs shall rest in his quiet chamber, waiting for the great Easter call. Promises of paradise hover about those little mounds around which Christians gather, weeping tears of natural affection, but wiping the tears away again as they remember: “*He was buried*.”
